

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13 L-03  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 920  
INFO ERDA WASHDC  
ERDA GERMANTOWN  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 8422

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: TECH, FR, US  
SUBJECT: SUPPLY OF US HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM FOR THE  
HIGH FLUX REACTOR AT GRENOBLE, FRANCE

1. CEA REQUESTED LAST YEAR SHIPMENT OF 16 KGS OF  
HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM AS FUEL FOR THE HIGH FLUX  
REACTOR AT GRENOBLE. AS OF THIS DATE, THIS REQUEST  
HAS NOT RECEIVED APPROVAL FROM THE USG AND THE DELAY  
WILL SOON CAUSE THE SHUTDOWN OF THE REACTOR FOR  
RESEARCH ACTIVITIES. THE DELAY IN THE SHIPMENT OF THIS  
FUEL HAS INITIALLY BEEN BASED ON PHYSICAL SECURITY  
CONCERN AT THE INTENDED FRENCH FABRICATION FACILITY  
AND MAY CURRENTLY BE HELD UP DUE TO THE INTERNAL USG  
REVIEW OF NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION POLICIES. THE PUR-  
POSE OF THIS CABLE IS TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT'S  
AND ERDA'S APPROVAL FOR THE EARLY TRANSFER OF THIS  
MATERIAL SO THAT THE MULTINATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM AT  
THE REACTOR MAY CONTINUE WITH MINIMUM DELAY AND IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH OUR EXISTING AGREEMENTS.

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2. THE REQUEST FOR THE MATERIAL INDICATED THAT THE  
PROCESSING OF THE HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM BE UNDERTAKEN  
AT A FRENCH FUEL FABRICATION FACILITY WHICH HERETOFORE  
HAS HAD LESS THAN COMMENDABLE PHYSICAL SECURITY  
STANDARDS. THE EMBASSY WAS ADVISED BY CEA ON MARCH 18,  
1977, THAT THAT MATERIAL WHEN DELIVERED WILL BE FAVORI-  
ZED IN GERMANY AT THE NUKEM FACILITY. (NOTE: WE DID

SUGGEST TO CEA OFFICIALS AT A MEETING IN EARLY FEBRUARY THAT CONSIDERATION OF FABRICATING THE FUEL AT NUKEM MAY ASSIST IN OVERCOMING THE PHYSICAL SECURITY IMPASSE.) IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS FACILITY HAS ADEQUATE PHYSICAL SECURITY STANDARDS FOR HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM AND THAT ERDA WOULD THEREFORE HAVE NO OBJECTION ON PHYSICAL SECURITY GROUNDS TO THE GRANTING OF THE PERMIT. THUS, THE REMAINING ISSUE WOULD APPEAR TO BE THE POSSIBLE DESIRE BY THE DEPARTMENT TO AWAIT THE RESULTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S REVIEW OF USG NONPROLIFERATION POLICIES AND HOW THE SHIPMENT OF THIS QUANTITY OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM WOULD BE AFFECTED BY THOSE DECISIONS.

3. THE HIGH FLUX REACTOR IS THE HEART OF THE INSTITUTE MAX VON LAUE-PAUL LANGEVIN (ILL) AT GRENOBLE. THIS INSTITUTE WAS FORMALLY FOUNDED IN JANUARY, 1967, BY AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONVENTION BETWEEN FRANCE AND WEST GERMANY. THE AIM OF THE INSTITUTE IS TO PROVIDE THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY WITH A UNIQUE NEUTRON BEAM FACILITY APPLICABLE TO FIELDS SUCH AS THE PHYSICS OF CONDENSED MATTER, CHEMISTRY, BIOLOGY, NUCLEAR PHYSICS AND MATERIALS SCIENCES. THE REACTOR WENT CRITICAL IN AUGUST, 1971, AND REACHED IT FULL POWER 57 MW IN DECEMBER, 1971. IN JANUARY, 1973, THE UK JOINED THE INSTITUTE AS A THIRD AND EQUAL PARTNER, HAVING CONTRIBUTED ITS SHARE TO THE TOTAL CAPITAL COST. AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONVENTION WAS FORMALLY SIGNED IN JULY, 1974, REFLECTING THE PARTICIPATION BY ORGANIZA-  
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TIONS FROM THE THREE COUNTRIES. THE INSTITUTE HAS DEVELOPED AN EXCELLENT REPUTATION FOR ITS WORK AND HAS WELCOMED VISITING SCIENTISTS FROM SEVERAL COUNTRIES, MOST NOTABLY MANY RESEARCHERS FROM THE US.

4. THE HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM FOR THE CORE OF THE REACTOR HAS BEEN SUPPLIED BY THE US UNDER THE US-EURATOM GENERAL CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF URANIUM, SIGNED IN JUNE, 1969. THE FIRST CORE WAS ORDERED IN 1969. THE CURRENT CORE LOADING IS 9.2 KG (8.55 KG OF U-235) OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM. THE REACTOR CONSUMES APPROXIMATELY SIX CORE LOADING PER YEAR. TEN MONTHS IS NORMALLY CONSUMED FROM RECEIPT OF THE MATERIAL IN FRANCE TO ACTUAL CORE LOADING; THE CURRENT LOADING WILL SUPPORT WORK AT THE REACTOR THROUGH SEPTEMBER, 1977. THE CURRENT CEA ORDER IS FOR 16 KG OF FRESH URANIUM WHICH WAS EXPECTED TO HAVE BEEN RECEIVED IN FRANCE IN JANUARY, 1977. ALTHOUGH SHIFTING THE FABRICATION ASSIGNMENT TO THE NUKEM FACILITY WILL REQUIRE SOME

ADDITIONAL TIME, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE RESEARCH PROGRAM AT THE REACTOR CAN CONTINUE WITHOUT UNDUE DELAY IF MATERIAL IS RECEIVED BY EARLY APRIL, 1977

5. THE SCIENTIFIC STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE INSTITUTE MEETS AT GRENOBLE ON MARCH 30, 1977, AND WILL DECIDE AT THAT TIME, BASED ON THE EXPECTED AVAILABILITY OF THE URANIUM TO BE DELIVERED FROM THE US, WHAT THE RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR THE INSTITUTE SHOULD BE DURING THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER, 1977, THROUGH MARCH, 1978. THE CEA, AS WELL AS THE FRENCH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, HAS EACH REQUESTED OF THE EMBASSY THAT FULL CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN BY THE USG TO THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES REGARDING THE WORK AT THE REACTOR AND THAT A PERMIT FOR THE EXPORT OF THE URANIUM BE ISSUED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO THAT THE MATERIAL MAY BE READIED FOR THE REACTOR TO SUPPORT THE NECESSARY WORK SCHEDULED FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

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LATTER PART OF 1977 AND THE EARLY PART OF 1978.

6. WE FULLY SUPPORT THE FRENCH REQUEST IN THIS MATTER AND IN VIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE END USE OF THIS URANIUM BELIEVE IT IS VERY MUCH IN US INTERESTS TO PERMIT THE EXPORTATION OF THIS URANIUM IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR EXISTING AGREEMENTS. THE FRENCH HAVE MADE AN EFFORT TO ACCOMMODATE OUR VIEWS ON PHYSICAL SECURITY STANDARDS BY THE SHIFT TO NUKEM. WE ASK THAT A CABLED RESPONSE ON THIS MATTER BE AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY SO THAT SOME WORD IN A TIMELY MANNER MAY BE GIVEN TO THE CEA FOR USE BY THE SCIENTIFIC STEERING COMMITTEE OF ILL AT ITS MEETING AT GRENOBLE ON MARCH 30, 1977.

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## Message Attributes

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